EUROPEAN **STUDENTS'** FORUM

AEGEE Toolkit

Fundraising

INDEX

1. Fundraising: An introduction

"Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving." Hank Rosso

For many of us, Fundraising might not be the most popular task, but the truth is that Fundraising can be one of the most challenging – and rewarding – tasks you can have, allowing you to make the implementation of your dream project possible and at the same time develop yourself: your practice networking skills, negotiation skills, learn to be more convincing and express yourself better and you get to apply your creativity.

The most important and principle rule when doing fundraising is this:

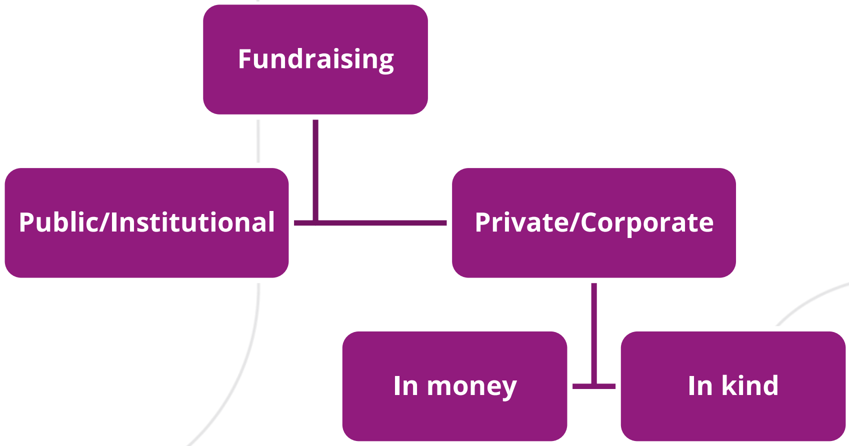
Fundraising is about cooperation, NOT begging.

Any Fundraising activity always creates a win-win situation for both sides, the sponsor and the benefactor (e.g. the AEGEE local). Both get something valuable out of the deal. Examples are:

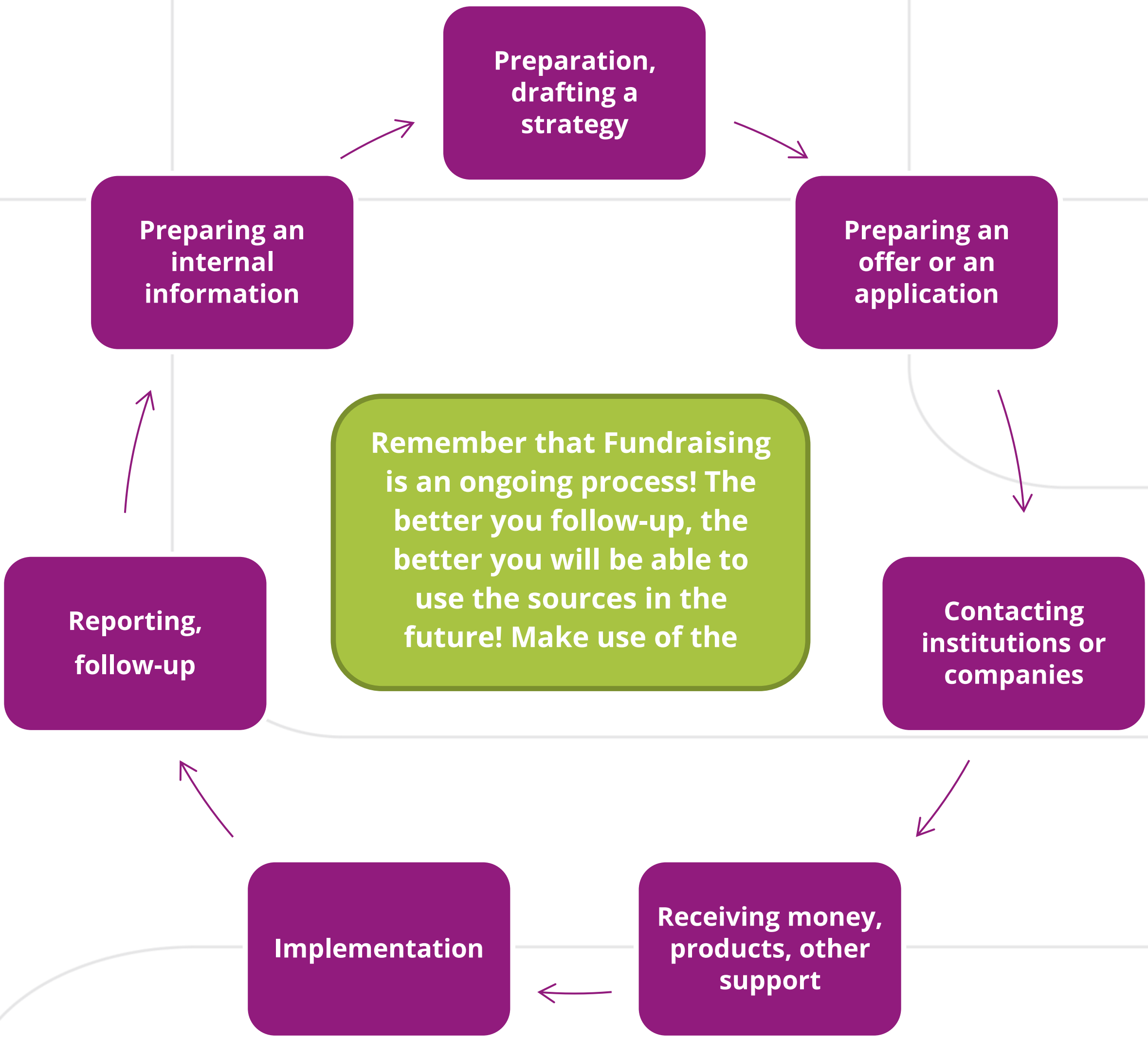
Situation	Benefits of the AEGEE antenna	Benefits of the sponsor
A university gives 1000 Euros in support of an AEGEE training.	The antenna can implement its project. Support of the university can also make the project more credible and make it easier to convince other sponsors.	The university improves their reputation (they are seen as supporting their student groups), support student life on the spot and make themselves more attractive and gain create a positive image for possible future international students.
The European Commission supports a project with a grant.	The antenna can implement its project. Support of the university can also make the project more credible and make it easier to convince other sponsors.	Work that the European Commission would have to do otherwise (bringing European Citizens together, creating a feeling of European Citizenship, promoting European values) is done by somebody else more cost-efficient.
A local bakery supports a Summer University with bread.	The antenna can implement its project easier. These kind of partnerships can save a lot of money if they are followed up properly and are turned into a long-term tradition.	The bakery promotes itself to students, promotes the local culture to European students, and the baker has the good feeling of contributing to something worthwhile.

In general, there are two kinds of Fundraising:

- **Public/Institutional**, that means from Institutions (like the European Commission, Council of Europe, etc.) and Foundations that offer recurring grants. They judge the value of your project (and whether to invest in it or not) based on specific criteria that are set before.
- **Private/Corporate**, that means from Companies (like Coca Cola or your local bakery) or individual people that want to contribute to your projects. They judge the value of your project (and whether to invest in it or not) based on whether you can convince them or not that it's worth investing.
- **Private/Corporate** can again be split into Fundraising in money (that means you receive money directly) or fundraising in kind (that means you receive goods for free, e.g. milk, bread, you don't have to pay rent for rooms, or you get a software for free)



2. The Circle of Fundraising



a. Getting to know your project/organisation

As first step for Fundraising, you need an excellent knowledge of your project or organisation. What are its strengths/weaknesses? What can it offer that other "competitors" (e.g. other student organisations) cannot? What is interesting for sponsors? How can they benefit from the project?

You also need to know the budget of your project/organisation. Once you know the needs of the organisation and the expenses you will have, sit down and mark: Which can be fundraised, and from which sponsor?

b. Public/Institutional Fundraising

Institutions (European Commission, Council of Europe, Visegrad Fund, etc.) invest in your organisation or project, because:

- You have similar values, aims and objectives to their own
- Your activities help them to fulfil their mission
- You basically do their work for them

i. **Preparation, drafting a strategy**

When you have the aims and objectives of your project defined, you can start looking for grants that might me suitable.

The downside of grants is that very often they need a long-term planning, and the application deadline is up to one year in advance. As soon as you decide to implement your project, check grant databases.

A grant we typically use to fund our projects is the ERASMUS+: Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission. If you want to find out more details about this programme, you can check the quick reference guide on Erasmus+ by AEGEE-Europe:

http://www.zeus.aegee.org/portal/resources/booklets-guidelines/

Other useful grants to check:

- European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe
- Visegrad Fund for Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary
- Open Society Foundation
- Anna Lindh Foundation for Euro-Mediterranean Countries
- Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Commission
- National Funds in your countries: Ministry of Youth and Education, youth institutes, youth councils
- Regional and local funds related to youth and education, youth councils
- Funds of your university

Useful newsletters to check with funding opportunities:

- http://eryica.org/
- http://under30yda.wordpress.com/

When you have chosen your grant programme, make sure to fully understand it:

- Read the programme guide
- Make sure you fully understand its values and priorities
- Make sure you understand the eligibility criteria: Does your project fit the criteria? Do you have countries included that are not covered by the grant? Do you fulfil age criteria, and the number of participants? Do you cover the range of activities that they request and the duration? And so on.
- Get a good understanding of how your projects fits into this programme and what can be its strong points in the eyes of the funder

ii. Preparing an application

When you have a good picture of the programme and the connection of your project/organisation to the programme, you can start writing the application.

No matter which application you write, these are some tips that can help you making your application more successful:

1. **Show that you are reliable and have experience:**

In many applications, the funder asks you of your previous experience. Make sure you mention previous projects on a similar or bigger scale that have been successful, mention the history of your organisation, mention that you are part of a Network which carries out many projects a year that are similar, also mention personal experience of the core team members briefly.

2. **Follow the priorities of the programme and the programme guide:**

You have read the guide before, make sure that in all parts of your application, it logically connects back to what is written there. Stress the points where your project fulfils exactly the priorities of the programme.

3. **Use numbers:**

Big words are nice and also necessary, but what many evaluators of applications actually look for is numbers, something measureable, and something which they can measure the success of the project by afterwards. Whenever you can, use hard facts and numbers that prove previous successes and guarantee the success of the project. You can use e.g. the numbers of the AEGEE Impact Measurement to prove that our projects have a positive influence on intercultural understanding and the feeling of being European (http://intranet.aegee.org/group_file/view/3/4341), you can use the number of projects you have carried out in the past successfully to prove that you are reliable etc.

4. **Don't make it look like a purely internal project:**

Many funders are looking for a bigger impact and aren't too happy if your project recruits its participants only from its members. When writing the application, don't be so specific about who will be the participants (e.g. instead of "members" just write students, instead of "AEGEE antennae" write student organisations etc.

5. **Use the AEGEE Network (esp. for dissemination and impact of your project):**

When it comes to dissemination of the results of the project, don't hesitate to use the fact that you are part of an international student organisation. Mention that you can spread your results to more than 13000 students all around Europe. You can also mention other dissemination possibilities, like EuroDesk, European Youth Portal, etc.

6. **Get to the point:**

You don't have to write big novels and lots of blabla, you just have to make sure that all the necessary information is there. If you don't enjoy writing it, you can be sure that the evaluator will also not enjoy reading it.

7. **Make sure your application is coherent:**

After writing the whole application, read over it one more time: Does everything add up and make sense? Is there a logical connection between the different parts?

8. **Don't be mediocre:**

Even institutions like innovations. What is different and out of the box about your project? Be innovative!

9. **Budget:**

The budget is a whole chapter by itself and making a good budget is like creating a piece of art. Here are some tipps:

- **Mind the basics:** We all know that a budget consist of an income and expenses side and that in the end, it has to be balanced.
- **Respect the co-funding rules:** In many projects, the applicant has to co-fund, that is, pay for a percentage of the project by themselves. E.g. in the Europe for Citizens Programme, EU Commission gives only 50% of the money, and 50% has to be provided by the applicant itself. This doesn't mean necessarily that you have to pay money directly. There are many things that you can list as co-funding without actually paying a cent:
  - Participation fee and travel costs of the participants
  - Free rooms of universities (just ask the uni to write you an invoice for what it would have costed)
  - Sponsorship in kind
- **Don't make the budget as small as possible:** Funders fund you because your project is of high quality, not because it's cheap. 3000 Euros more or less are peanuts for them. Be generous with the numbers, rather make them bigger than smaller, add also things that you would like to have, but are not absolutely

necessary to the budget. Also consider to include subsistence for possible trainers or speaker fees. If funders don't agree with some of the costs, they can always cut them, but they will never increase a submitted budget for a project.

- **Make sure the budget reflects what you have written in the application:** The budget should be the mirror of the application. E.g. if you have written that you will create a website for the project, make sure to include server costs, if you are going to print PR material, include printing costs, etc.

10. Make sure you application is complete and you fulfil all criteria:

The most common reason for rejection of an application is that it doesn't fulfil all the criteria. Before submitting it, check once again:

- Do you fulfil all eligibility criteria (number and age of participants, countries of origin, number of partners, number of countries, eligible countries, etc.)?
- Do you have all the necessary additional documents? Many applications require e.g. declaration of honour, budget, programme, financial identification documents, proof of NGO status, … It helps to make a checklist before starting to write the application.
- Did you sign everywhere where you have to sign?

11. You can exaggerate, but do not lie:

Make your project flashy and shiny. Polishing it and making it look bit more beautiful for the funding is fine, but do not promise things that you cannot provide in the end. Remember that the relationship with your funder should be a long-term one, and if you mess up the relationship once, you might risk not to receive funding for a very long time in the future.

12. MAKE SURE TO RESPECT THE DEADLINE:

This is the basic thing. You can have the most perfect application and the best project in the world, if you hand it in one day after the deadline, you are automatically excluded. If you realise one day before the deadline that you are still missing some partner agreements or documents, still submit it with an explanation to the funder. Chances are that you can hand in some documents later, but if you don't hand it in, miss that chance.

iii. Contacting the Institution

Once you have finished the application, you can submit it through the channel provided by the respective institution.

Do not hesitate to contact the institution also before, during and after the application process: Many times institutions are more flexible than we think. If something in the application is not clear to you (after reading the guide), write them an email or call them.

If after you have submitted the application, you need to change something (e.g. partners, number of participants, countries to travel from, location of the event, etc.), contact the institution and inform them. They are sensible people, in most cases, if the core of the project stays the same, it's possible.

iv. Receiving money

In most cases, the money will be transferred to your bank account after your application has been accepted. Usually, you will have to sign a contract with the institution where it states how the money will be used and tells you conditions (e.g. putting the logo of the institution on the material of the project etc.)

v. Implementation

Here is usually where the problems start. Unfortunately, with receiving the money, the work hasn't ended. Reporting your project afterwards is a much bigger workload than writing the application itself. If you don't prepare this phase already during the implementation, you will have a big problem afterwards, because you will be missing necessary data and documents. In the worst case, you will have to give money back to the agency, which can bring your antenna in serious trouble.

Already before the implementation phase, check the guidelines of the application, reporting templates and other requirements, so know exactly how you have to report afterwards and what kind of documents you will need to provide afterwards to the institution.

As general guidelines:

- Make sure the bookkeeping of the project is done properly and that one person keeps the overview of all the expenses that are made for the project. This person has to be informed of all expenses before they are made.
- Keep all the bills for all the expenses.
- Collect boarding passes of participants right away. Inform participants that they will have to provide them.
- Make participants, trainers and organisers sign a list of attending people.
- Take pictures! Lots of pictures! Especially ones with the logo of the institution visible (and NOT only party pictures, but pictures that show workshops, panel discussions, museum visits, etc.)
- Collect all material that is produced during the project: Handouts, power points, invitations to official parts, etc.

vi. Reporting, follow-up

This is the most uncomfortable part of the application, but the most necessary one and the one that, if done properly, will make it much easier to receive funding from this institution afterwards, since you establish a relationship.

- Appoint a person responsible for the final report before the project implementation starts, so this person can already make sure that they have all necessary documents during the project.
- Fill the reporting form of the institution as requested and attach all necessary documents.
- Send the report WITHIN THE DEADLINE! If you cannot make it, ask the institution if you can postpone, but provide them with a valid reason (e.g. general assembly of the organisation has to approve the finances first).
- You can insert some pictures of the project in the report (chose the best 3 ones) if you wish. It's also a good idea to send them additional material if you have, e.g. the final publication of the project. If you have had personal contact with the person working in the institution and responsible for your application, you can even add a small thank you note to the documents you send (but keep the report itself impersonal)

vii. Preparing an internal information

Make sure you store the application, the report, information about the institution and all useful additional information as well as all related documents somewhere where it is easily accessible for your successors, and where they know they will find it, so they can make use of it in the future!

Congratulations, you have just successfully completed the FR cycle of Institutional Fundraising!

c. Private/Corporate Fundraising

Companies invest in your organisation or project, because:

- they are looking at your members as prospective market of young people who will also buy their products as adults
- they want to recruit young, active people with the profile of your members
- they want to improve their reputation (Corporate Social Responsibility)

The good thing about companies or individual sponsors is that they are much more flexible than institutions. In corporate fundraising, you really work on a people basis: You don't have to convince companies, you have to convince people. Personal rapport can really therefore really help with establishing good relations. Also, corporate fundraising leaves room for creativity! You are not provided a framework, so you can come up with your own offers, opportunities and creative methods.

The disadvantage compared to institutional fundraising is that you typically receive a smaller amount of money (or in kind contribution) and that you often have to contact a big amount of companies for relatively small results. However, being able to implement your project because of the good job you did with fundraising is very rewarding!

i. Preparation, drafting a strategy

You should start with corporate FR as soon as possible, but at least 4 months before the project.

Start by creating a list of companies you want to contact. Think of the ones especially that can help you with contributions in kind (those are very often much easier to get). Target rather the local and regional companies or the regional and national offices of multinationals than the big headquarters. Coca Cola International might not care about a small training of 25 people in your city, but the small local company that has just opened might need some additional promotion. For each of the companies, write down how each of the companies can support you and what you can offer them.

Corporate FR is much easier if it goes through personal contacts. Ask your members, and especially your alumni, but also your relatives whether they know somebody who works in a company which would be willing to sponsor, and create a list of these people.

Divide your list of companies into groups with similar profiles: What is the size of each company? What about your project could be interested in? How likely is it they sponsor you?

ii. Preparing an offer

In order to receive sponsorship for your project, you have to make it look as attractive as possible, to be able to "sell" it.

For this, you have to prepare one or several offers with different profiles for each of the different types of companies that you want to contact.

Things you can typically offer to companies are:

- Promotion: Putting the logo of the company on your website, sending an email to your members, promoting the company at university, mentioning the company in all media coverage of the project, putting their PR material in the welcome package of your events, promoting the company as partner of your antenna during recruitment phases etc.
- Visits: Possibility to present the company during your events (e.g. presentation), lead a workshop, invite a representative, etc.
- Recruitment: Put them in contact with the participants of the event, send their job offers to them, provide them with select CVs (to be agreed with the participants)
- Networks: You can also offer to put the company in touch with other stakeholders, such as AEGEE-Europe, which has access to 13000 students
- In some countries, antennae registered as NGOs can also provide companies with a certificate of their sponsoring so they can deduct it from their taxes
- You can offer much more, brainstorm with your team and think out of the box!

Things you can ask from a company:

Basically anything within the range of the possible, using common sense. The important thing is that you have clear what you want to ask. If you want to ask for money, don't ask for huge grants (depending on the profile of the company,) but go rather for smaller financial contributions of up 3000 €. It is more likely that you will get it. If you want to ask for money, always prepare also a budget which shows what they money will be invested in and what you are willing to contribute yourself.

Once you have everything clear, you should prepare an FR Booklet. In the booklet, you present your project as flashy and fancy as possible, also visually in a nice way, including all its strengths and the benefits a company can have from investing in it. Its purpose is to have a catchy document, which contains the important information about what you want to sell, to direct the attention to most attractive points of the event and to give information on exact partnership opportunities.

Make it clear and concise. It should have around 4 pages.

It can include the following information:

- Basic info about AEGEE and your antenna
- Reference to previous successful events
- Detailed explanation of event
- Testimonials (previous partners, university ex. Rector)
- Logos of previous partners
- Offers
- Contact details

The booklet should not directly contain prices (unless you plan to reach with one booklet a large number of companies directly). This gives you more room for negotiation and changing an offer on the spot.

Some more tips:

- Make it visually attractive.
- To show that you are part of a European Network, use the AEGEE Visual Identity.
- Use the AEGEE Identity in the description of AEGEE.
- Include pictures to make it more visual and personal.
- Keep the design simple and don't use too many fonts and effects.
- Reduce the text to the necessary information.
- Don't use abbreviations and internal AEGEE slang (such as ES/European School, NWM, etc.)
- Send the booklet to an outsider (your friends, parents) to give feedback on whether the information is clear and understandable.

You can find examples of booklets here: http://www.intranet.aegee.org/cd/view/3#documents/4707/page:1

iii. Contacting the company

Now you are prepared to actually take the step and contact a company.

When you contact a company, you have to keep in mind several factors:

1. Am I contacting the right person?

It's very important that your offer ends up with the person that can actually work with it and is responsible. If your offer goes to somebody who has no connection to the field, or to the general email address of the company, it very likely will not even be looked at. It can be e.g. the Director of Marketing, somebody in the HR department, somebody responsible for Corporate Social Responsibility etc.

You can find out who this is either by doing a research on the company's website, or by calling the company directly and asking who is responsible.

2. Am I using the right channel?

Typically, you contact the responsible person first by email and then by phone. However, in some cases other channels might be more appropriate. For small local shops, e.g., the most efficient way might be just to go there in person and establish personal contact directly.

3. Do I know what I'm contacting the company for?

In your first email/phone call, you typically don't ask right away for exactly what you want, but more generally for support. However, it can happen that the other side asks you, in this case you need to be prepared and have in mind what you wanted to ask for.

<u>The phone call</u>

When calling a company, your goal is usually to arrange a meeting. At a live meeting you have much higher chances of getting your offer accepted: you have time to get to know the other party, time and opportunity to present yourself, and also many other chances to persuade the representatives "on the other side of the table".

Also sometimes it can happen that there is no need for a meeting. When fundraising for materials for example it is usually enough to talk on the phone and send some basic information via e-mail.

During a call you'll have a unique opportunity to talk with a potential partner therefore, you'll be able to find the needs of your target and possible ways of cooperation between your organisation and the target.

In order to get through to the relevant person, it's a good trick to use the name of you university instead of "student organisation" or "AEGEE". Just say that you call from the University of XX and want to be transferred.

When you reach the person that you wished to talk to, you should:

- Present yourself: Say clearly your name, which organisation you represent, your function (fundraising responsible, secretary), and the purpose of calling. Always try to use the name of the person in order to make the call more "personal".
- Present the event you are organising: Describe the event that you wish to fund. Emphasize the benefits that the company you are calling will have by being a partner at your event. Use keywords, impressive facts, numbers and figures about your event.
- Ask for a meeting: The primary goal of the phone contact is to explain your request and ask for a collaboration. A real meeting is more personal, so preferable, but most of the time they will ask you to send info by e-mail. This with the danger of not being read! So, try to set up a meeting.

Sending the offer

After the phone call, you have to do the follow-up.

Write an e-mail and send the offers (booklet) attached! Briefly refer to the phone call and resume it, mention the next steps to do (e.g. the agreed meeting, you are waiting for feedback, etc.)

Include your signature in the email (name, full position within your association, contact info).

The Meeting

You managed to get a meeting with a company? Great! That's one step closer to success!

Make sure you go to it prepared:

- Know the number of representatives of the company present during the meeting. Bring accordingly the amount of booklets, offers, etc. (and maybe bring 1-2 extra just in case). Also bring some general material about your antenna or AEGEE (e.g. Key to Europe).
- Make sure you have an in depth knowledge of the company so that you can make an offer that suits their needs. You can e.g. check other projects they fund, events they are involved in, their website and their promotional material, etc.
- Know the details of your project by heart, esp. the ones about promotion, number of participants, speakers, hours, etc.
- If possible, go in a pair (ideally a guy and a girl), this way you can complement each other in the meeting. Make sure you divide roles before and it is clear who does what.
- Dress properly, but not exaggerated (you are from a student organisation, so the complete suit is probably not necessary, but a formal jacket is nice).

During the meeting:

- Always have a positive attitude and be enthusiastic. You are there to sell your project, if you are not enthusiastic about it, why should the sponsor be?
- Believe in what you are presenting to the company. Go to the meeting only if you think and believe that those things are achievable and a real benefit for the company. You can exaggerate a bit, but never lie!
- Ask them how much time they have for the meeting and adapt your presentation of the project according
- In most of the meetings, you will first present you organisation, then the event, and then the benefits the company will have. Make sure you wait for reactions and questions from the side of your host. Also ask them questions to get to know what they think.
- Only then present as suggestion the support you had imagined from the company. If they say yes, brilliant, your meeting was successful. If not, be prepared to negotiate a bit and adapt your offer.
- In case you received a NO, keep the company informed of your activities and opportunities for you to cooperation.

Here are some techniques you can use during a meeting:

http://www.kevinhogan.com/persuasion.htm

http://www.startupnation.com/articles/10-techniques-for-better-negotiation/

http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/NegotiationSkills.htm

iv. Receiving money, products, other support

Congratulations, you made it!

When you got a yes from the company, close the deal. Make sure you agree on when and how the money/goods/in kind support will be transferred.

In case it is about money, it is useful to have a signed agreement from their side. It has to be only 1 page stating what you will give to them and what they will give to you in exchange.

The good news are: In case of the corporate FR, the lion share of the work is finished here ☺.

v. Implementation

Take pictures of the products of the company or the logo of the company visible somewhere during the event.

vi. Reporting, follow-up

After the event, follow up. Send them a thank you note with some pictures of the event.

Also after the event, stay in contact with them, update them about projects of your organisation, keep up a good relationship.

vii. Preparing an internal information

Make sure you store information about the partnership, information about the company and all useful additional information as well as all related documents somewhere where it is easily accessible for your successors, and where they know they will find it, so they can make use of it in the future!

Also, before you leave your organisation, make sure you introduce your successor to the person you have been working with in the company.

Congratulations, you have just successfully completed the FR cycle of Corporate Fundraising!