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| Logo  Description automatically generated |  | sponsorship  Sponsorship Activity #8 |

# Text Description automatically generated with low confidencesponsorship sales “TRAINING”

Building a strong sales team is an essential component to the success of any sports team’s off-the-field success. The same goes for your school Sports Business Program.   
  
While it takes time, practice, and training to become a polished sales professional, this activity will help your sponsorship team begin to build the sales skills necessary to secure corporate partners for your event. Like any endeavor, practice makes perfect so be sure to work through the role plays provided in the next activity.

**Step One: Understand the product or service being sold.**

On a sheet of paper, identify exactly what it is that you’re selling, being as descriptive as possible. Then, address the following questions:

* What inventory (advertising, signage etc.) is available to be sold?
* How much will the various components cost (review your rate card)?
* What are the features and benefits to your product or service?
* Do you have a sponsorship “deck” or presentation you can share or leave with a potential sponsor?

**Step Two: Identify prospective customers and develop leads.**

Leads or prospects are the names of individuals and companies who could become future customers. Identify one or two businesses that you would approach as a prospective sponsor. If you have already created a list using previous activities, select from those lists. In sales, this step is referred to as “prospecting”.  
  
**Step Three: Qualify and gather information about the prospective customers.**

Learn as much about each company as you possibly can. This is part of the prospecting process. Understanding what makes a company tick is crucial to the sales process and will help you determine which companies are strong candidates for a sponsorship. If you have a fundamental understanding of how each company functions, you’ll have an easier time determining how a sponsorship can help them to achieve their organizational goals. On another sheet of paper, record as much information as you can about each of the prospects you’ve identified.   
  
You will also need to determine who the decision maker is. Which individual at the company is in a position to decide whether to sign on the dotted line for a sponsorship program? Do they have experience with your team, venue, or event? If they are not a key decision maker, what influence (if any) do they have over the purchasing decision?  
  
**Step Four: Contact prospective customers (the sales call).**

The sales call is the initial form of communication in which the salesperson makes contact with the prospective customer and can take place via telephone, e-mail or in person. Your first approach should be to make a phone call to the decision maker in an attempt to secure a face-to-face meeting. If you are unable to reach the individual, you will want to draft a cover (sales) letter and proposal.

The letter should be addressed to the decision maker at the business you have chosen. In the first paragraph of your letter identify yourself to the reader and explain why you are sending this proposal. In the second paragraph, explain and highlight key details of the sponsorship proposal.   
  
The key is accentuating the components you think the sponsor will be most interested in and explain how their involvement will be beneficial to their business. In the last paragraph thank them for their time and tell them you will follow up with a phone call to determine a convenient time to meet.

**Step Five: Establish credibility, rapport, and a reason to communicate.**

This is a step that will prove to be far easier in person than via email, mail or telephone. In an ideal scenario, you will already have a connection in some way, shape or form with the prospect. It could the parent of a classmate, a booster, or a community activist. Ultimately, it will be the face-to-face appointment provides the best opportunity for the sales professional to build rapport and establish a relationship with the potential customer.

**Step Six: Identify and confirm a customer’s needs.**

In this step of the process, you will identify and confirm the potential customer’s needs. The key is to ask the prospect as many questions as possible. The best salespeople are great listeners. Try to learn about challenges the company faces. Who are their target customers? Do they have any upcoming promotions? How are they communicating with the community? After you’ve established the prospect’s strategic approach to marketing and sales and uncovered “needs”, you’ll be able to customize a proposal that meets those needs.

**Step Seven: Presentation and proposal.**

A proposal is a written recommendation of products or services his or her organization may offer to meet those customer needs uncovered in the needs analysis. Each proposal is customized to meet specific customer needs based on information uncovered in step six.

Think about how you plan to present the proposal to the prospect.

* Will a sales “deck” help to enhance the presentation?
* Do you have any statistics or other valid information that will accompany the proposal as part of the presentation?
* Do you have any visuals, videos or graphics to share?

**Step Eight: Ask for an action on an interest in company products or services.**

In this step, you will be asking for acceptance of the proposal or for a purchase decision.

Typically, the prospect will have some questions, concerns, or hesitations regarding the information you have presented and your proposal.

**Step Nine: Handle objections.**

Objections are a prospective customer’s concerns or hesitations in making a purchase decision. It is the responsibility of the sales professional to uncover and overcome each objection to the customer’s satisfaction. Potential objections could include statements like:

* “I'm not interested”
* “I'm too busy right now…”
* “That isn’t in the budget…”
* “I need to discuss this with my boss…”
* “I can get the same results for less money by doing something else…”

**Step Ten: The “Close”**

The close is the stage of the sales cycle where the prospective customer and the sale professional come to an agreement on pricing and services, in which the customer typically commits to a purchase of some kind. This is the step when the prospective customer becomes an official customer. However, many sales professionals often make the mistake of thinking this is the last step of the sales process!

**Step Eleven: Follow Up**

The follow up stage is critical to ensure a satisfied and happy customer. The organization is responsible for ensuring all services agreed upon throughout the sales process are fulfilled, particularly since a lot of new business comes from existing business.

**Step Twelve: Fulfillment/Service**

Fulfillment is the process of following through and delivering on all promised services to the customer. Meeting and exceeding customer expectations is integral to retaining their business in the future. Renewal is the agreement between the organization and customer to continue the business relationship for a pre-determined, often times contractual, period of time. Providing exemplary customer service is incredibly important. The obvious byproduct of excellent customer service is the ability to keep existing customers. However, providing great service can result in new business via referral and by differentiating your products/services from the competition.

**Step Thirteen: Evaluation**

Measuring the results of a promotional investment (sponsorships) help an organization determine its effectiveness. Evaluations are typically objective (sales fluctuations) but can also be subjective (increased media attention or public awareness). It is important for the sales professional to be involved in this step of the process to gain a better understanding of whether or not they are meeting client needs.