

Most Scout Groups are sponsored by a local community group. These groups may include religious institutions, service, fraternal and civic clubs, professional, business and occupational associations, military bases, public and private schools, home and school associations and groups of citizens/parents.

Working within these cooperative partnerships, Scouts Canada provides programs for Sponsors to offer in their outreach to youth. Provided they accept the **“Mission, Principles and Method”** and follow the policy of Scouting as set out in **“By-law, Policies and Procedures”**. The Scout Group’s Sponsor is free to choose any or all of the programs and services from Scout Councils.

Scouts Canada depends on the local Scout Group to help maximize its relationship with the Sponsor. There are five key strategies for ensuring that Scouts Canada and its Sponsors’ interests are fulfilled to their maximum potential. These are outlined as follows:

1. Ensure mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities;
2. Improve communication;
3. Encourage Sponsor participation;
4. Support the Sponsor;
5. Recognize the Sponsor.

The following are 12 practical tips on establishing and maintaining a great Sponsor relationship along with a list of helpful on-line resources.

Ensure Mutual Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities

Mutual reliability starts with understanding respective roles and responsibilities. When one partner does not have a clear grasp, it is in the other’s best interest to clarify. When equal understanding is achieved, both partners can strive to meet their common vision.

Tip # 1 Annual Charter Renewal and Orientation Meeting

The Annual Charter Renewal and Orientation Meeting provides many benefits to both the Scout Group and the Sponsors. An annual gathering provides an opportunity to meet the new and existing Sponsor members. Networking will take place naturally and the event will already have proven mutually beneficial. A formal session to review the Scouts Canada Partnership Agreement would be appropriate. You can access a basic PowerPoint presentation title **“In Partnership for Youth”** to help facilitate this review.

Tip # 2 Meet With the Sponsor One-on-One

From time to time, a meeting between the Area Key Three, the local Scout Group Commissioner and Sponsor can prove to be a very valuable. Topics of discussion include the Sponsor’s role, the Area’s role, an evaluation of the relationship with regard to the Partnership Agreement and the possibility of more youth recruitment through a combined Scout Group/Sponsor effort. The Council Field Executive can help collect and present this data. To help plan your meeting check out the **“Sponsor Meeting Agenda”**.

Improve Communication

Clear and concise communication is vital to a successful relationship. You can take action to enhance your communication in several effective ways.

Tip # 3 Pick Up the Phone

A key to communicating is to develop a rapport that is courteous, friendly and helpful. This can be achieved in as little as two minutes. A two to three minute phone call every month, over a year, adds up to a half hour conversation.

Conversation topics include upcoming Group events, special Group or member accomplishments, concerns the Sponsor may have, opportunities to support Sponsor initiatives and areas of support for the Scout Group.

Tip # 4 Copy Sponsor on a Group Newsletter

Use the "[It Starts with Scouts Newsletter](#)" template to develop a newsletter that can be distributed to families within the Group and the Sponsor. Easy-to-use and inexpensive desktop publishing software can help you express the Group's creativity. Recruiting someone to be a journalist, editor and publisher of a regular newsletter should be relatively easy.

If you create hard copies make sure you drop off enough for the Sponsor's membership. If you do plan to do an electronic version, know that Sponsors may be reluctant to give out e-mail addresses for distribution. If you can, do both.

Encourage Sponsor Participation

Involving the Sponsor in the Scout Group will better their understanding of Scouting's potential within their organization and the community. A greater degree of sharing of resources will occur, which will enrich both the Sponsor's organization and the local community. By continuing to provide community leadership, Scouting's profile will be enhanced in the public eye.

Tip # 5 Invite Them and Show Them a Good Time!

Always send the Sponsor a personal invitation to a meeting, event or activity. Explain to them why they are invited and what is required of them. Invite a couple of their members who aren't on their executive: this is particularly valuable if there are a number of Scouting alumni in the Sponsor's membership. Make sure they get the "royal" treatment and ensure they are provided with opportunities to interact with the youth.

Scouting offers so much fun that we should be sharing it with everyone. A key to receiving more support from Sponsors and their membership is to provide more opportunities for them to see Scouting at its best. Club presidents, church board directors and other organizations' people make terrific Cub Kar Rally judges, guest speakers, barbeque chefs, storytellers, musicians, etc. At the very least, a member of a Sponsor organization may be more generous next time a Cub Scout knocks on their door to sell Scout Popcorn.

Tip # 6 Ask For Their Help

Scouting is rich with thousands of talented volunteers and many of the Sponsors are equally so. Occasionally asking for their assistance creates an atmosphere of cooperation (i.e. if the Group is dealing with a financial issue, ask a Sponsor for the expertise of their treasurer, or if there is a need for mediation between Scouting friends, approach the clergy of a religious organization to provide some advice).

Support the Sponsor

Providing support to Scouting Sponsors will help strengthen them, and the Scout Group will be stronger for it.

Tip # 7 Offer Praise and Congratulations

The Group Commissioner should not be shy in providing token notes of encouragement to the Sponsor on their other programs, projects and initiatives. Encouragement is always helpful when endeavoring to improve the lives of others. A quick note to say “way to go” or “good luck with your project” will create an abundance of goodwill.

Tip # 8 Offer Assistance

There is unlimited expertise and people power in Scouting, and there’s nothing more Scout-like than the sharing of these resources! When a need becomes apparent, an offer to help can reinforce the friendship aspect of the Scout Group/Sponsor relationship.

Tip # 9 Raise the Sponsor’s Profile

Generally, Scouting is good at getting in the local newspaper. Many Sponsors are quietly doing so much in the community that a simple phone call to the local newspaper’s editor might result in a good story. An occasional “Letter to the Editor” praising a Sponsor’s good deeds also may result in appreciation, and be noticed within the Sponsor’s membership.

Recognition of the Sponsor

As in all friendships, appreciation and recognition are vital to creating and enhancing the relationship. Treat Sponsors like the Scout Group’s best friend and good things will happen.

Tip # 10 Celebrate Sponsor Contribution to Scouting

A relationship lasting more than five years is well worth recognizing, and Scouts Canada can help your Scout Group do this. [“Sponsor Appreciation Certificates”](#) are available to download.

Tip # 11 Celebrate Annual Charter Renewal

Charter Renewal is an annual statement of a commitment two organizations are making to help youth. Celebrate and enjoy the moment. When the Sponsor is signing the renewal, have the youth greet and thank the congregation as they enter their place of worship or meeting (maybe have them hand out apples).

Tip # 12 Send a Note or a Card

Sometimes a note from the Council Commissioner provides special recognition and in turn, may benefit your relationship with a Sponsor. Requesting one from the Council Administrative Centre is as easy as sending an e-mail.

Creating a collaborative environment with Sponsors so that Scouting can benefit more youth is a key priority. Fostering a harmonious partnership with Sponsors will directly contribute to both a better program and help increase local membership. There is no limit to what can be achieved when there is an enthusiastic and fresh synergy between Scouting members and their Sponsoring institutions.