

# HANDY HINTS: In-kind & Pro Bono

## WHAT IS IN-KIND/PRO BONO SUPPORT?

When someone does something 'pro bono' they're contributing their professional skills or services for free. It's also often referred to as 'in-kind', which can include the donation of products. This type of support not only saves money but can provide access to higher quality services and can be a first step to a longstanding partnership that can include financial donations.

### +PROS

- Saves resources (money and time)
- Access highly skilled professional support &/or services at no cost
- Can lead to long-term support
- Access to new contacts
- Leverage additional support
- Raise profile

### -CONS

- Time from initial contact to agreement
- Risk to your brand/reputation
- Imbalance between what you give vs. what you get
- Relationship management (time & partner expectations)

### In-kind/pro bono examples

- Legal advice
- Strategy development
- Design (rebrand, campaigns, website etc.)
- Advertising space
- Printing of annual reports, flyers, posters etc.
- Venue space for meetings or events
- Accommodation

## GET READY – PLAN & PREPARE

### Things to consider

- **Time & resources:** Who will lead on this work? Do they have the time, experience etc.?
- **Are your website and social media up-to-date?** Most potential partners will check these. An out of date website or inactive social media account can put people off.
- **What do you need?** Look at your budget. What do you spend money on?

- **What can you offer? And for what level of support?** Benefits could include branding, press releases, social media mentions, invitations to events, speaking opportunities, etc.
- **Exclusions:** Are there any industries/businesses you won't accept support from? Get input from your board. It's good to be clear on this before starting the research stage.
- **Measurement:** It's good practice to put evaluation processes in place at the start. Also, increasingly funders are recognising in-kind/pro bono contributions in application budgets so where possible try to estimate a financial value for the support received.

## Research

- **Start with who you know:** Get your board and team involved. Speak to friends and family. Who do they know? Who have they recently met? Can they introduce you?
- **Current & previous supporters:** Gives them a way to support you that isn't financial.
- **Others:** Look at your contact list. Also, research who supports organisations similar to yours (cause, location etc.) and/or who has provided the type of support you need.
- **Be systematic:** Keep a record of your research including companies that aren't relevant and why to avoid duplicating research in the future. A simple excel is fine.

## NEXT STEPS

- **Shortlist targets:** Are they a good fit? Could a partnership damage your brand?
- **Research:** Find specific contact details and research recent sector/company news.
- **Overview document:** Create a brief overview that's easy to tailor with potential benefits, contact details, images and quotes or case studies.
- **Template emails/scripts:** Be clear, concise and personal. Explain why you're getting in contact and why it's relevant. Consider having a phone script.
- **Initial contact:** Tailor emails and overview document. Mention when you'll follow up as this can often encourage a response.

## MEETINGS & FOLLOW UP

- **Prepare:** Research the company, sector and person you're going to meet/speak to. Think of questions they might ask and your answers. Be clear on why you're approaching them.
- **Listen and ask questions:** Instead of focusing on you/your organisation, find out about them and their needs. Ask questions and identify opportunities.
- **Follow-up:** Send an email that day to say thanks and confirm next steps and timing.
- **Proposal development:** Based on your meeting, create a proposal tailored to their needs. Follow-up and adapt as required. WARNING: This stage can take time.

### REMEMBER

- It takes time
- Personal relationships are key
- It's OK to say 'no'
- Don't offer too much
- Never feel bad asking. You're not asking for you but for your cause. And you're offering something in return
- No response is not a 'no'
- If it is a 'no', ask for a charity discount &/or ask if you can contact them in the future

## SUCCESS – AGREEMENT & DELIVERY

- **Agreement:** For longer-term and/or more complex partnerships, it's important to have an agreement in writing so it's clear what both parties have agreed to do and the timeframe.
- **Thank you & updates:** Say thanks and update the partner when you've done what you said you would. Send them images of branding at events or links to coverage etc.
- **Relationship management:** Allocate one person to manage the relationship.
- **End of partnership:** Send a report highlighting the benefits they have received, including numbers reached. Meet to get feedback and discuss possible next steps/future opportunities.

## GOOD LUCK!