

Tips for raising sponsorship

Thanks so much for committing to raise funds for The Bethany Children's Trust. Your hard work is going to make a huge difference to our partners, as they seek to transform the lives of marginalised children. Raising sponsorship can seem a daunting prospect, but it doesn't have to be an ordeal. With the right approach and a little perseverance, you may be surprised how much you can raise. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Ask EVERYONE! – Don't assume that anyone won't sponsor you. Just ask. The worst they can say is 'no', but most people will agree to help you if you're raising money for a charity, even if they can only spare a couple of pounds.

Make it easy to give – Take a sponsor form and pen with you, everywhere you go. If you have an iPad (or similar), make sure your give.net page is always open in your internet browser. When someone agrees to sponsor you, hand over the form or the iPad on the spot. If you send out an email to ask for support, don't forget to include a link to your give.net page. If you write letters to ask for sponsorship, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope, so people can send you cash or (preferably) cheques made out to The Bethany Children's Trust.

Keep asking – A number of people will probably agree to sponsor you online, but not follow it up. Usually, these are people who really mean to support you, but simply forget. Don't be afraid to give them a gentle reminder. The same is true when you're chasing up your sponsors for money, after the event. A lot of people will need to be reminded two or three times, before they hand over the cash.

Be smart with your sponsor forms – Try to start each sheet with a large donation, even if that means sponsoring yourself! Other donors are likely to be influenced to give generously, if they see a hefty figure from the first donor. If the first donor on the sheet doesn't pledge as much as you'd hoped, start another sheet.

Get your family and friends involved – Talk to them about BCT and what you're trying to achieve, and ask them to help you with your fundraising. Arm them with sponsor forms and get them sharing the link to your give.net page. If you're running an event which you're inviting people to (like a meal, a quiz or an auction), get your friends and family inviting people and ask them to help out on the day.

Social media is your friend – But not the whole solution. Facebook and Twitter (and LinkedIn) are great for explaining what you're doing and why, and for sharing links to your give.net page. Instagram and Snapchat can be useful too, for sharing relevant photos. (eg If you're training for a long-distance run or bike ride, share pics of your training.) But posts on social media are easy to ignore. If you want people to sponsor you, there's no substitute for face-to-face conversations.

Talk to your boss – A lot of companies are very concerned with corporate responsibility and making a difference in their community and beyond. Your company might be willing to sponsor you, if you tell your boss a little about what you're doing. They might even be able to match the sponsorship you raise from other donors, if you really impress them!

Don't forget to say thanks – Once the dust has settled and the sponsorship money has all been collected, it's tempting to just breathe a sigh of relief and leave it at that. But don't forget to say thank you to everyone who has supported you. A number of people may have given more than they could really afford to give. They deserve to feel appreciated. And if your sponsors are left feeling good after the event, they're more likely to sponsor you again, another time.