1. Research the businesses you approach

Before approaching a local business make sure you do some research about the organisation.

The best place to start is the ‘About us’ section on their website - look at if they have an existing CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) policy or if they have given to specific causes in the past.

Check what projects they are currently involved in and if/when/how they relate to your cause.

Having a knowledge of the business will demonstrate that you are interested in a partnership rather than just making an ask for donations.

2. Think about how you can benefit the business

Businesses are less likely to help your organisation if you just approach them with a request for money. Instead think about how a partnership can be mutually beneficial. Things you can provide may include:

- Volunteer days for their staff
- Credit and promotion of the help you’ve received from them on social media, on your website, by emailing your supporters - even on your Localgiving page!

By thinking about what you could provide as a charity you will have a better understanding of how well your cause and the business are aligned and this will make your ask far more appealing.

3. Make your charity stand out

Provide examples of what you’ve achieved with the funds you’ve already raised and what a particular donation could mean to your group, e.g. ‘£10 buys X’.

Make sure you explain how your group benefits your community and the individuals you support.

Provide a positive story, e.g. ‘with the help of Y we achieved X and provide statistics about the wider sector, e.g. ‘7% of donations go to small charities’.

The more figures you can provide the better!

4. Plan when to approach the business

Appeals and fundraising events, with their added time pressure, can often help persuade a local business owner to commit to support you. The same applies to Localgiving match funding campaigns: businesses often like the idea of their donation being leveraged by a match fund.

Some groups find that local businesses prefer to fund something specific, like your Localgiving annual membership, rather than just provide a donation. So think about whether there’s something they can have their name attached to, bought with the donation they made.

5. Keep in contact

Make sure you stay in regular contact with the business after your initial conversation kicks off.

Remember, the business and its employees could end up being long term supporters and businesses make for brilliant team fundraisers.

Keep them up to date with what your charity is up to, how they’ve helped to benefit you in the past and what you have coming up next.

Any questions? Please call Localgiving’s help desk on 03000 111 2340 or email help@localgiving.org and we will be happy to help you.