

Tips and Suggestions for developing corporate partnerships

What are some suggestions for communicating the benefits of youth mentoring to businesses?

- Be confident and passionate about your program and what it can offer your partners.
- Promote the potential benefits to their staff, such as development of communication and team work skills.
- Raise that involvement with youth mentoring programs can contribute towards corporate social responsibility targets.
- Have a previous mentor or match speak about their experience at a partnership development meeting or national mentoring week dinner. Alternatively develop a DVD with a mentor, mentee or match telling their story and experience of being involved in the program.
- Use facts, figures and graphs (qualitative data) wherever possible to illustrate the benefits to young people.
- Develop targeted business recruitment strategies for different areas of the program they could be involved in.
- Research local businesses to find which ones have corporate responsibility values that match your program's values.
- Present your organisation as having a lot to offer rather than waiting for a handout.
- Deliver positive presentations about young people - build on their strengths and the future.

What are some of the challenges programs have faced in developing corporate partnerships?

- Corporate organisations often have their own agenda and desired outcomes when it comes to partnering with mentoring programs. Bear this in mind and accommodate their needs where possible.
- Be clear about what the involvement of the company will be and have a written agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding naming rights, use of logos and other requests that may come with corporate engagement.
- It can be difficult to communicate the often intangible outcomes of mentoring programs to organisations that are only interested in the 'bottom line'. Try to include some kind of quantitative data in your presentations and briefs.
- It can be difficult to balance the time it takes to develop and maintain partnerships with the outcomes they produce, particularly when Program Coordinators are working part-time. Make sure the partnership truly of mutual benefit and isn't going to take more resources to support than will be received.