
Building the Pipeline:

Prioritizing and researching prospects

Your best prospects are those that will recognize your impact and value proposition, and those for whom you have a possible solution to one or more company objectives. These are likely to fall under the groupings and criteria below.

Connected organizations

Corporate prospects with whom you have personal and/or historical connections should always be contacted for new, renewed, and possible upgraded relationships. Even when they may not be the best prospects for the largest relationships, given that many of them are accustomed to giving at a lower level, they definitely reflect continued opportunities and should always be contacted and informed about opportunities to grow their relationship you.

These connected organizations include:

- Past donors to you
- Companies represented by Board members and other volunteers
- Companies where Board members, volunteers, and/or staff have personal connections
- Vendors and business partners of yours

Companies with likely objectives that match what you can deliver

As we mentioned above, those companies currently connected to you should continue to receive your attention. Your contacts may not be in the right positions to build larger relationships, or they may take some time to evolve to broader relationships. Thus, when prospecting, it is equally important to look at new prospects for whom you can deliver a different kind of partnership value.

For example, the following is a starter list of objectives you may be in a position to currently deliver for corporate partners:

- Acquire, retain, or further engage customers or consumers
- Engage employees
- Showcase products, services, and/or expertise
- Change/reinforce corporate image
- Demonstrate corporate citizenship
- Stimulate sales and/or create a short-term promotional boost
- Create or advance social innovation
- Drive media consumption
- Build awareness for brand, product, service, or new offering
- Differentiate from competition

Where to look to gather qualification data: key web research sources

In order to shape initial outreach and offers to specific prospects (a critical step in building large relationships), research is a high priority.

Key sources for prospect data and partnership inspiration include the following:

- Company web site
 - Partnerships, giving, or like
 - PR, communications, news, or like
 - CSR, sustainability, or like
 - Corporate blog
- Look at company social media for highlights of their partnerships, especially:
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - o Instagram
- Google search: Company name, plus appropriate search terms such as the following:
 - Partner
 - Support
 - Objectives
 - Marketing
 - Sponsor
 - Community
 - Giving
 - Strategy
 - Philanthropy
 - City/cities
 - Priorities
 - Outcomes
 - Civic
 - Board
 - Program terms, e.g., child, health, education
 - Audience/segment terms, e.g. parents, professionals
- In each of the above searches, follow each promising thread to find:
 - How their business works
 - What their brand stands for (Service? Innovation? Quality? Family?)
 - What corporate values they are espousing
 - Who their target customers are
 - Who their target employees are
 - What they support/current partnerships
 - How they support/partner
 - What they are aiming to do with it:
 - Engage employees
 - Demonstrate good corporate citizenship
 - Reach a specific audience
 - Showcase their company's products/services
 - Reinforce certain brand attributes (e.g., service, innovation, speed, family-friendliness, local, etc.)
 - Drive business/marketing goals
 - Build awareness