beeline


# CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS ATTRACTION KIT

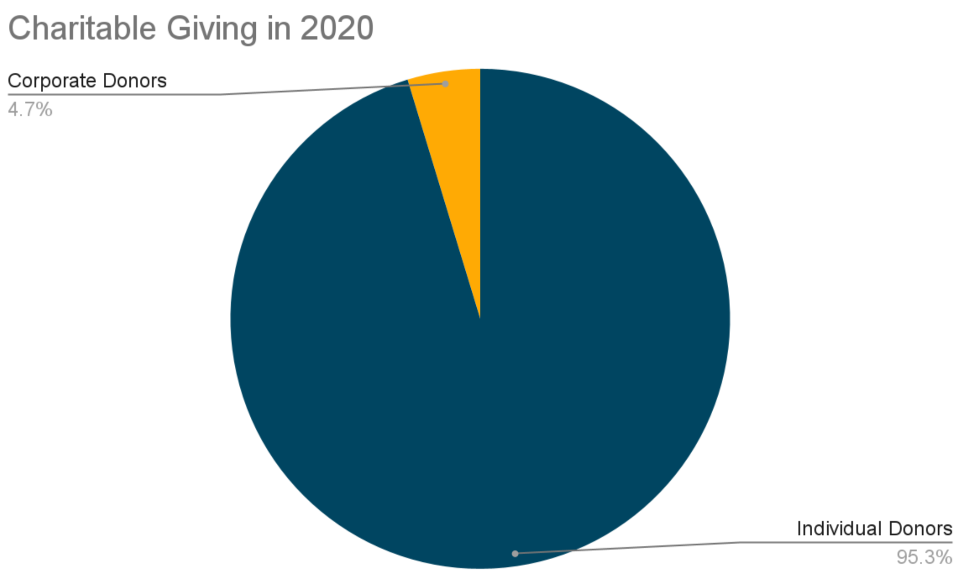
A Step-by-Step Guide to Attract **Corporate Partners** to your Nonprofit

# The Value of Corporate Partnerships

How can you measure the impact of partnerships between companies and your nonprofit?

Well, the simplest way is to measure by looking at the direct financial benefit. For example, in 2020, corporate charitable giving totaled $16.9 billion.[1] If your organization received corporate donations, then you could measure the value of your corporate partnerships in dollars

There are two problems with this measurement. The first is that corporate charitable giving is completely overshadowed by individual giving. While companies donated nearly $17 billion to nonprofits, individuals gave $324 billion that same year! [2]




That comparison could lead you to believe that corporate partnerships aren't worth pursuing because they're just a "drop in the bucket." This is certainly not true, as you'll learn in the rest of this guide. The second problem with focusing ONLY on the direct financial benefit is that money is only part of the story! The potential benefits that come from corporate partners are abundant and often overlooked by the average nonprofit. Companies support organizations like yours in numerous ways, including:

[1]https://www.nptrust.org/philanthropic-resources/charitable-giving-statistics/
[2]https://www.nptrust.org/philanthropic-resources/charitable-giving-statistics/

- Financial support for your fundraising events and/or programs
- A workplace giving program (enabling employees to auto give, deducted from each paycheck)
- A matching gift program
- In-kind donations
- Volunteers or a volunteer grant program
- Skills-based support
- Cause marketing (% of sales donated)

While nothing can replace the importance of your individual donors, partnerships with companies open important and unique doors for your organization. Furthermore, they can often help you with individual donors by creating natural ways to start relationships with high-level executives – some of whom could be ideal major donors.

In other words, the case for finding and forming corporate partnerships is compelling. Of course, since you're reading this guide, you already realize that. The real question is not why, but how.

## How do you effectively attract corporate partners?

A lot of the advice that gets promoted to nonprofits about corporate partnerships usually focuses on how to get companies to financially sponsor your program or fundraising event in exchange for publicity and branding (i.e. advertising). Furthermore, much of the advice completely overlooks the need for an actual strategy to create these partnerships in the first place.

Getting Fortune 500 companies with well-known giving and corporate responsibility programs to sponsor your next fundraising event or donate in-kind products or services sounds nice. But these companies are approached by nonprofits all the time. How do you consistently and effectively start these kinds of relationships in the first place?

That's the question this kit will answer and in fact, show you exactly how to accomplish. Our goal is to teach you to effectively and consistently (and even easily) open the door to long-term relationships with companies. Where you take these partnerships in the long run is up to you, but the biggest hurdle is always *starting those relationships* in the first place.


## About this Kit

In this guide, instead of helping you build relationships with individual donors (you can get our free 27-page eBook on this topic here!), we are going to teach you how to connect and partner with companies. The first step to getting new partners for your organization is to start a new relationship.

Before we go any further, however, allow us to share something that may sound counter-intuitive in a guide on corporate partnerships:

**Companies don't partner with nonprofits.**

What do we mean by this?

Only individuals (people with personal experiences, values, and emotions, who happen to work at companies) create partnerships with nonprofits. This means that your goal with corporate partnerships is to reach people in ways similar to how you attract new individual donors!

By connecting with people who have some decision-making capacity at a company, you will open the door to all kinds of mutual benefit, including positive PR, employee satisfaction, and more followers or customers, as well as sponsorships, volunteers, workplace giving, and a lot more.

The most effective corporate partnerships empower collaborations that help companies achieve their goals while naturally furthering your mission.

This guide or "attraction kit" will give you all the tools you need to find, reach out to, and start relationships with corporate partners through an easy-to-follow and effective strategy. How effective?

Our results typically show that 1 out of every 3 companies you approach will welcome the opportunity to collaborate!

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# STEP 1:
# Create a List of Potential Partners

The first step to forming partnerships is research. It's far easier to consistently reach out to new companies if you already have a list of potential partners to work through.

Your goal in creating this list isn't to find your top or ideal partners; for now you simply want a long list of potential companies that you can later review and qualify to determine which ones to approach.

Below are strategies to help you do this research, ensuring that the companies on your list are "pre-qualified." This means they have some natural connection, values, interest, or affinity with your nonprofit.

## Resource A: 26 strategies to find and create a potential partner list

The best way to get momentum in forming partnerships is to start with "low-hanging fruit" – that is, people who are close connections to you or your organization, or whose company you know (work, content, products, or services).

Why does starting here help with momentum? Because the easiest way to hear "yes" from new partners is to start with people who need no introduction to you or your organization. The trust that comes from existing relationships will save you a lot of effort in pitching a partnership.

### Close connections (9)

| |
|---|
| Friends, family, Board members, or contractors who have businesses or audiences |
| Blogs or email lists you've subscribed to |
| Podcasts you listen to |
| Products/Services you use |
| Books you've read |
| Community leaders you know |
| Sites that link to you or to whom you link |
| People you've heard speak |
| Donors or volunteers with businesses |

After you've gone through your close personal and professional connections with people, companies, products, and interests, you can start looking further afield. Usually, this involves a Google search (or social media search), to find a company that has some natural overlap with your organization:

## Third-degree connections (17)

| |
|---|
| Search podcasts by keyword |
| "KEYWORD" + top blogs or + software or + services |
| Advertisers on KEYWORD results pages |
| Related searches at bottom of pages |
| Search Producthunt.com for KEYWORD |
| Search Instagram for KEYWORD (hashtag or accounts) |
| Ahrefs - Backlink research |
| FB Audience Insights |
| FB Pages - "Liked by Page" |
| FB Ad Creation - Detailed Targeting "Suggestion Feature" |
| FB Page - Like a key competitor or industry page, FB Suggest other pages |
| FB Group Search |
| Search Twitter (Look for people sharing content by big influencers in your target audience- they may have the size partnership) |
| LinkedIn Group Search |
| Someone who has interviewed on a podcast of someone else on your list |
| Kickstarter top campaigns |
| Quora Answers |

STEP 2:

# How to Qualify Potential Partners

Once you've compiled a long list of potential partners, it's time to evaluate which on the list are the ideal. (That is, sorting those who will be a good long-term fit.). The key to an ***ideal partner*** for your nonprofit is a company who:

- has values aligned with yours (as a whole and specifically with your mission)
- has a large reach (meaning, one or more of: lots of website traffic, large email list or social media following, high employee count)
- has marketing/HR individuals or teams who can support your partnership

Bonus points if the company also has:

- experience partnering with or sponsoring nonprofits
- an employee matching donation program
- a volunteer grant program (offers paid time to employees for volunteer hours)
- an annual giving campaign

Part of sharing the above is to say that before you put in time and effort to reach out to these potential partners, you want to qualify them. Before you contact them, you want to make sure it will be worth it! Below we share what you can do to sift the companies on your list to ensure they are qualified as ideal.

Go through your list and find out these characteristics about each partner:

- Company size (revenue)
- Employee count
- Website traffic: Ubersuggest or ahrefs.com/website-authority-checker
- Social media following
- Past charity/volunteer work or partnerships
- Companies who have these programs already

You need to determine for your own organization the definition of a "qualified" partner, using these categories to disqualify companies that are too small or not a great fit. You might be willing to work with smaller companies when you are trying to start your first partnerships. In fact, bigger is not necessarily better – sometimes companies with a strong overlap in values or relevance to your organization are much more likely to bring you new followers, volunteers, or donors, than companies with more money, employees, or website traffic.

# STEP 3:
# How to Reach out to Partners

There are of course many ways you can reach out to new potential partners. If you have a connection in common, you can ask your connection to make an introduction, whether personally or through a platform like LinkedIn.

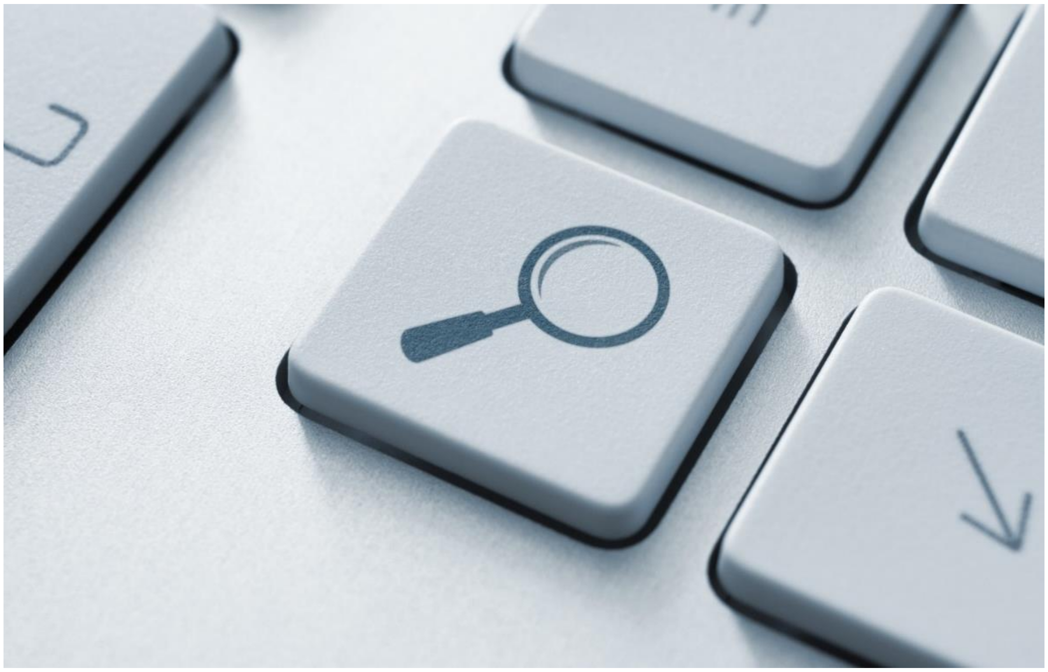
In this guide, we are going to focus on how to do outreach through cold emails. Why? Because not everyone uses LinkedIn or other social media platforms, and while some people don't keep up with their inbox, everyone has email.

The key is writing emails that get a response.

From all the cold email outreach efforts we've managed and seeing one-third of people reply to say they are interested in partnering, we can tell you this works!

Whether you send an email, message someone or tag them on social media, or even give them a call, the strategies in this guide will help you open the door to a relationship with someone new - naturally and effectively.

# STEP 4:
# How to Find Email Addresses



Your target contact may not publicly share their email address on their company's website. That's not a problem – we know how to get around that with just a bit more research.

Here are some tips and software that we use to find nearly every contact we want to reach without fail:

- Google: search first name (or first last) + domain name, i.e. firstname@domainname.com
- Go to the company Facebook page – About – Contact info.
- Go to their LinkedIn Profile – Contact info (Paid subscribers can also message them directly)
- Reply to a marketing email to see what appears in the "reply to" field
- Software options:
    - https://hunter.io
    - https://findthatlead.com
    - https://rocketreach.co

# STEP 5:
# An Outline for Cold Emails


While the best email you can write is personal, genuine, and gives the partner compelling reasons to talk with you (that are in their interest first), having a template for this email can shorten and simplify the outreach process.

Before we share our template, however, let's understand the outline and each of the parts of an effective cold email.

Here is the outline of a cold email:

1. Subject
2. Hook
3. Anchor
4. Win for them
5. Ask/Close

Let's break each one of these parts down to help you understand what they are, what they should contain, and why.

## 1 Subject

- What it is: it's obvious – the subject line of the email!
- Contains: The contact's first name (only)
- Why: Because you can use it regardless of who you are reaching out to and it's always relevant and attention getting. If you think it may seem too much like clickbait because it doesn't give the person any detail about your email, don't worry, the next part (the Hook) will address that.

## 2 Hook

- What it is: the first line of your email (5-7 words), which will show up in the inbox preview for most users.
- Contains: A catchy, interesting, attention-getting sentence.
- Why: The purpose of the hook is to get your contact to open the email. It should be personal but not creepy; interesting and about them in some way.
- Examples:
  - "You are my personal Oprah"
  - "My kid tore up your book"
  - "I just gave your product 5 stars (or 1 star) for the first time!"
  - "Thank you for ______"
  - "I've been following your company for ______ years."
  - "Your name keeps popping up"
  - "Do you know ______?" (common connection)

## 3 Anchor

- What it is: This is the first section of your email. It should anchor the conversation and create trust so that your contact feels comfortable with you. Prove to them that you're not a stranger nor a fan, but a collaborator and encourage them to take you seriously.
- Contains: Just enough points to create a connection; the more you know someone the less anchors you need - too many anchors is weird!
  - something or someone in common

- proof you've learned from them, shared their ideas
- personal enough (not vague) without being weird (don't sound like a stalker)
- about them
- measurable
- includes picture when possible

## 4 Win for them

- What it is: This is the reason you are reaching out and why they should reply/ want to talk to you. It contains:
- A transition sentence: Take them from the Anchor to the Win.
  - "Because of this, I thought that we could . . ."
  - "Because you do this / your audience this, I thought that we could"

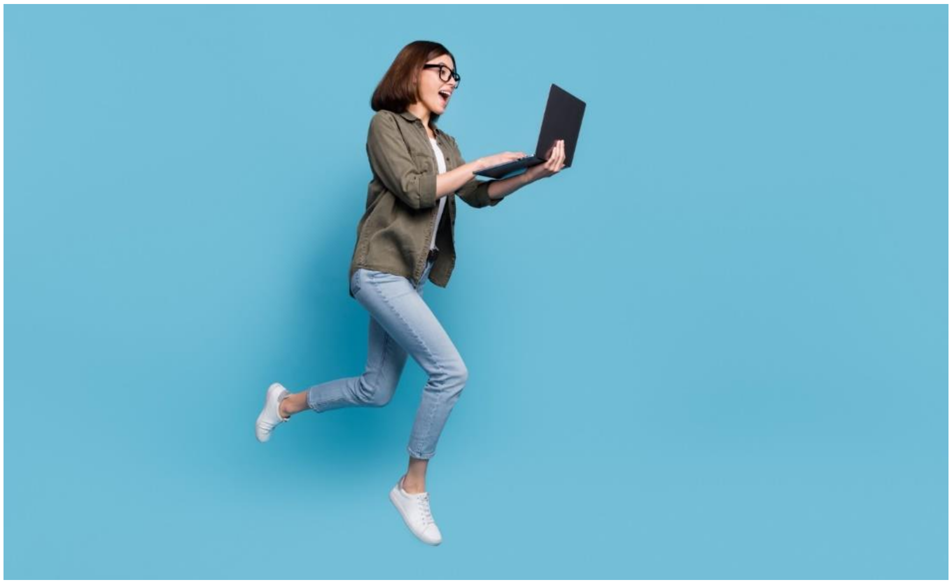
  The "I thought that we could" is your chance to give a specific idea & result that would come from collaborating with you.
- Examples:
  - Because your audience wants to . . . I think they might be interested . . .
  - Because I know you have a ton of expertise in this topic and we want to promote a digital resource about this topic, I thought that we could put our $10,000/month ad budget behind a piece of content that we collaborate on.

  You don't need to explain your win or reasons to want to partner with them; that can come up in a future conversation, and often a win for you is implied.

## 5 Ask/Close:

- What it is: This is a short question that asks them to take a next step. The details can all be worked out; your goal is to get them to simply reply so you can get the conversation started.
- Contains: A single question to get them to reply with a clear yes or no.
- Example:
  - "Are you interested?"
  - "Can we schedule a quick call?"
    "Do you have 10 minutes this week for a call?"
  - "Does that seem unreasonable?"

## Resource B: 3 Cold Email Best Practices (i.e. how to make recipients happy to open & reply!)



1. Never include links in your email. You want the contact to read it and reply, not click a link, get distracted, and forget to reply.
2. Use short paragraphs – make it easy for your target contact to understand the gist and skim to the end where they will see your “Ask”. Your goal isn’t to send them a detailed plan to sign off on, but to just get them to reply so you can set up a call.
3. Keep it short; you will always feel the need to say more to improve your hook, anchor, or win. However, usually less is more: meaning, if you can quickly establish rapport and show you care about their interests, move quickly to the “Ask”. Once they reply or you have a conversation with them, you can cover any details you needed to skip in that first email.

## Resource C: 5 Hook, 17 Anchor, 9 Win, and 11 Ask Ideas

To make your outreach efforts even easier, this guide includes a long list of ideas for each of the parts of the cold email. That way you can take your specific situation, target partner, and create an email that takes these things into account without having to reinvent the wheel each time.

### 5 Hook Ideas

- Quote them or someone else they've quoted.
- Start with them ("you", "your company", "your product", "your content").
- Use a question; you can mildly flatter them if you're being honest.
- Examples:
  - You are ______
  - Your company/product helped me _____
  - You recently did/shared/said ______
  - Your (content) is/was ______
  - Why should I ____ / Can I _____ / Can you _____

### 17 Anchor Ideas

| Connection to their Product/Service |
| --- |
| Say you consumed their content (blog, email, podcast, etc.) |
| Share about buying/using their product |
| Share about a benefit you've experienced from their content, product, or service |
| Say how long you've been a customer |
| Share a review you made of their product or service |
| Tell how you've shared their content, product, or service with others |
| Tell how much you appreciate them and why (a specific story) |

| Connection to the Contact |
| --- |
| How you found them through a shared connection |
| You saw them promoted/linked to/mentioned by someone you know |
| A mutual friend or connection makes an introduction |
| Reference a common connection |
| Ask if you can introduce someone to them that they should know |
| You've met them before |
| Your website links to another site that their company also links to |
| You've probably crossed paths but have never met |
| Your org was featured by the same person or channel as their company |
| You went to the same conference / are part of the same association |

## 9 Win Ideas (Wins for your partner)

| |
| --- |
| More email subscribers |
| More followers |
| More customers / product sales |
| Positive PR / Branding |
| Employee citizenship & volunteer opportunities |
| Furthering their mission, vision, values, or community involvement |
| Corporate giving programs |

| | |
|---|---|
| Teach their audience something valuable | |
| Tax deduction | |

## 11 Ask Ideas

| Idea | Description |
|---|---|
| Marketing / content collaboration | Their marketing dept. helps you create a lead magnet, which you both promote and use to get new subscribers |
| Workshop / Webinar | You collaborate to teach and offer content to their audience on a relevant topic |
| Guest Email | They send an email to their list (external and even internal) with your free content |
| Poster Child | Your org. serves as an example of the benefits of their product/service/corporate citizenship |
| Podcast interview | Be a guest on their podcast or vice-versa |
| Speaking opportunity | They invite you to speak at a conference, company event, etc. |
| Discount & donation | You promote their products/services (possibly at a discount) to your audience, while they offer to donate a % of sales |
| Content sponsorship | They sponsor some of your digital content and add relevant, valuable information related to their products/services for your audience |

| | |
|---|---|
| Event/fundraising support | They support your fundraising event through advertising/promotion, in-kind gifts, auction gifts, volunteers, or sponsorship |
| Peer-to-peer fundraiser | Promote a peer-to-peer fundraiser to their employees as a health initiative and fundraiser for your org (Challenge w/ t-shirts and prizes to run 1 mile per day for 30 days) |
| Preferred nonprofit | They point employees, customers, and other connections to your organization as their "preferred nonprofit" to support |

### Next Steps If You Get a "Yes"

1. Are you interested? (They said yes)
2. Reply to schedule a call
3. On the call, ask for a direct action (their commitment/action items should be small)

## Resource D: Cold Email and Follow-up Templates

This document contains the outlines for the emails, and you can write your emails directly in it with reminders on what to include in each part. You can always come back to this Kit for more detail as needed.

ACCESS THE EMAIL TEMPLATES

# STEP 6:
# Email Follow-up Strategy

The key to forming successful partnerships isn't in just writing an awesome cold email. It's in following up. Because of this, this guide will show you a cold email follow-up process that leads to a high response rate.

The fact is, even if someone at a company would love to partner with your nonprofit, they might be on vacation, busy with a project, or unable to immediately reply. Your gentle follow-up emails show that you are serious about the value of the partnership and make it much more likely that you'll get a reply. Why? Because a follow up email ensures your target partner:

1. Doesn't have to remember you or your pitch after reading it the first time
2. Doesn't have to try to find it in an inbox full of dozens, hundreds, or thousands of other emails.

The best way to form partnerships is to make it as easy as possible for your partner to say yes and to make it clear what the next step is (reply, book a call, etc.).

In the above-linked document, we provide templates *and the most effective timing* for three follow-up emails, including important points on what those emails should contain to make it as easy as possible for you to write them.

## Resource E: "Troubleshooting" Communication Issues

What if you get an interested reply, but then your potential partner never sets up a call? Or worse, you have a great call with them, but then they disappear? In other words, what should you do if a potential partner "ghosts" you?

Here is a list of three strategies you can try to revive communications:

1. Use the "side door"

   Try contacting them through another channel. If you've been corresponding through email, send them a message through social media, an SMS, or if it's appropriate, give them a call. Alternatively, make a post on social media that's relevant to them and tag them in it. Don't bring up your partnership conversations here. Just use the post to gently reconnect and get their attention.

2. Write a short, action-oriented email

   "Hey (first name), I want to get this collaboration figured out. I'll do all the work, just tell me times you're available for 15 minutes. Does that sound unreasonable?"

**Quick tip:** In this email, make "no" the answer you want them to give. Why?

It's much safer for someone to say "no", than to say "yes", and so if you empower their "no" to be a step toward collaboration, you are again making it easier for them to take that step.

3. Change the topic

Reach out to comment about something they or their company has done, published, or accomplished, or even something personal if appropriate. Create a reason to talk to you for something completely unrelated to the partnership.

Don't worry, if they are still interested, the partnership is still on their mind, and they may in fact feel embarrassed for not having responded yet. If you make it possible to talk by starting a new conversation, you open the door for them to reconnect with you in a positive (face-saving) way, which will often enable you to get back to moving forward on your partnership.

The goal of these strategies is to make it easy for a potential partner to take the next step with you, open the door for them to share concerns they might have, and prevent them from losing face after a period where they failed to communicate.

## Need help creating relationships with your own Corporate Partners?

We have tons of experience forming successful partnerships with companies and will happily coach you through the process.

Set up a call with our team, let us know what your goals are, and we can get started.

BOOK CALL

Please know that we are so confident in our work and results that we offer this guarantee:

We promise you will get a new corporate partner within 30 days, or you get two free months of additional corporate partnership marketing services!