

Sponsorship Opportunities for Orienteering

An analysis

Dennis Mews – April 2013

Sponsorship can be useful to organisers of major orienteering events, in terms of **cash or services** offered, but there is a cost in terms of time spent finding and servicing the sponsor. We would need to know the value of the sponsorship against the time cost of achieving it.

It is important to have an understanding of the potential sponsors' **financial year**. Companies which have a sponsorship budget will tend to operate an annual plan, so knowing when this process begins would be most important.

We would need to have a clear **Event or Series project** with which sponsors may wish to become identified. A lead-in time of 6 months or more may be appropriate. Sponsors seek TV and Radio exposure and this may be difficult for orienteering clubs to achieve.

Most current orienteering sponsorship is obtained through government organisations. Peta Whitford has been most successful in gaining **Sport and Recreation Victoria funding** for ongoing Orienteering Victoria projects to the tune of \$90,000 over 3 years. These cover the costs of new event initiatives, permanent courses, a media officer, coaching courses and training courses for event officials. Compared to this level of funding, commercial sponsorship will be difficult to secure since membership numbers are at a relatively modest level and unlikely to give sponsors a suitable return on their investment.

Possible companies and organisations which may be acceptable to the membership, considering the characteristics of orienteering, include those operating in the fields of **healthy lifestyle, travel, computers, investment and the environment**. I was contacted recently by a finance company wishing to advertise in the email bulletin, which I refused after reading OV policy – this could be considered, but at the cost of alienating some members.

An unsolicited letter is unlikely to achieve the desired response. **Personal contact** would be far more likely to succeed and this would suggest a current orienteer with access to management decision-making in a suitable company. An informal audit of orienteers working in suitable fields may provide a few suitable contacts who could begin this process.

One possible way forward is for the board to identify a **suitable project** e.g. Schools, Families, Event Series, and then to compile a potential short list of active orienteers whose company may be approached through them, with a view to establishing a working sponsorship arrangement.