



FIRST Team 2506's Tips on Keeping Track of Sponsors and Their Contact Information

There are many ways to keep track of sponsors and their contact information. Just because we say something in this article does NOT mean it is the best way to do things. It just means it works for us. Anyway, the following is a list of tips and tricks we use to store our sponsor data. Some of this info may be similar to things on the Obtaining and Retaining Sponsors Tip Sheet.

1. First off, do not put all information in one person's personal flash drive or notebook. Especially if said person is a senior because data likes to walk away from the team sometimes. We lost all of our data from our first season because a senior member of our team had all of the files on his flash drive and never got it back to us. Not fun.
2. Another good idea is to keep a back up of all of the information on a separate drive or in another notebook for the same reasons that #1 was a good thing.
3. Our team keeps all of our lists electronically. This saves hassle of loose papers and ensures that the documents are legible to everybody, not just those who wrote them.
4. We keep track of all of our sponsors' contact info in a Microsoft Access address list. The list started as a mail merge list linked to a document then we learned how to change it directly through the Access file. This method makes it much easier to pursue your list than in the edit list option in Microsoft Word.
5. A separate Microsoft Excel file houses information on what we have received from sponsors over the years. You may think, "Why not just keep this data in the other file as well?" That could potentially work, but we also keep a spare copy of contact info in our Excel file so as to ensure the information is not mysteriously deleted.
6. Somehow keep track of who you have sent sponsor letters and thank you letters to. This prevents embarrassing slip ups like sending two thank you letters (or not sending one).
7. Put a name to a company. If you can find contact info for a particular person (managers, presidents, and heads of community outreach divisions) send letters specifically to them. Keep their names on your list. Also if you get a reply from a specific person rather than the company at large add their name to the sponsor contact list. Those people are most likely the people you will contact in the future.

8. Now to actually keeping track of your sponsors. It is a good idea to send out thank you letters as soon as you receive donations. This lets your sponsors know you got the gift and are paying attention.
9. Throughout the year send letters to your sponsors to let them know how you are doing. This makes them feel more involved and more likely to help.
10. Invite your sponsors to your meetings or offer to help at their events. Sponsors love to know you care. They are often more than willing to take a tour of one of your meetings or have you give a demonstration. This is a good opportunity to not only promote your team but FIRST as well.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns send us an email at saberrobotics@yahoo.com and we would be glad to help out.

Thank You,

FIRST Team 2506, Saber Robotics Marketing Team