



Strategic Takeaways

Stop Calling the Wrong Person About Partnerships

Most partnership outreach doesn't fail because the idea is weak.
It fails because you contacted the wrong person.

Organizations aren't structured around "sponsorship."
They're structured around revenue, growth, customers, market share, and ROI.

If your outreach assumes there's a neat little "sponsorship" box on the org chart, you're already off track.

1. There Is No Universal "Sponsorship Buyer"

Here's the reality: many people with "sponsorship" in their title are selling, not buying.

The real buyers are the people responsible for driving business outcomes.

That typically means:

- Marketing leaders driving demand
- Business development teams opening doors
- Sales leaders focused on pipeline
- Product and brand teams launching initiatives

There is no magic title.

There is only alignment between what you offer and what they're accountable for.

2. Influence Is Broader Than You Think

Not every conversation needs to start with the decision-maker.
But every conversation should respect the decision-making process.

The people who influence deals often:

- Approve budgets (finance)
- Control feasibility (IT, operations)



- Manage execution (marketing ops, agencies, contractors)

Ignore them, and your deal doesn't die early—it dies late.

3. Finding the Right Person Is a Process

There's no shortcut here.

The right contact is rarely obvious—and almost never labeled “Head of Sponsorship.”

The path usually looks like this:

- Start with a relevant function (marketing, media, events, etc.)
- Ask what they're actually trying to accomplish
- Move laterally across teams
- Let the internal champion reveal themselves

The best deals don't come from guessing.

They come from navigating.

4. Know When You're Talking to the Wrong Person

Pay attention to the signals:

- “Just send me a deck”
- No clarity on goals
- No ownership of budget
- No visibility into the decision process

Ask early:

- *Who else is involved in a decision like this?*
- *What objectives would this need to support?*
- *How does something like this get approved?*

If they can't answer, you're not in the right conversation yet.

5. Remember the Two Wallets



Every organization has two ways to say yes:

The Affinity Wallet - “We believe in what you’re doing.”

The Audience Wallet - “We want access to who you reach.”

Affinity feels good. Its soft value.

The audience drives decisions. It's a hard value.

If you lead with a mission and skip the business case, you’re asking for support, not building a partnership.

Practical Checklist Before Your Next Outreach

Before you hit send, ask yourself:

- Do I understand their business objective?
- Am I targeting someone tied to growth or revenue?
- Have I considered who influences the decision?
- Do I know where an internal champion could emerge?
- Am I offering access to an audience—not just alignment?